



LOMOND
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB JOURNAL

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EDITORIAL:

Club Members are reminded that to ensure getting a seat on the Club Bus they should book at least a fortnight in advance. Bus runs for each month will be decided at the monthly meetings.

Once again we would ask members to send in their articles at the earliest possible date.

All notices should be sent to the Editor, H.W. Grant, 12, Clinchar Road, Glasgow. S.2.

CLUB NOTES: NEW MEMBERS.

We have pleasure in welcoming the following new members to the Club:-

Captain Hugh Mackie, Messrs J. Wilson, R. Dobbie, I. Martin, W. Forrest and Miss N. Parker.

ANNUAL DANCE.

This year again the annual dance took place in the Prince of Wales Hall on 16th November. Climbing boots and breeches were discarded in favour of more elegant wear but the capacity of members and friends to enjoy themselves remained unchanged. Most club members managed to keep this date, including Bill Walker whose leave co-incided.

LANTERN LECTURES:

Bill Russell has taken on the job this winter of arranging lantern lectures and film shows in the Club Rooms.

Mr. Ben Humble started off the series by showing films of Nevis, Stob Gobhar Couloir and, of particular interest to the Club, a colour film of members climbing and sunbathing in Skye. This was followed by a lantern-slide tour of Scotland with appropriate comments from Mr. Humble to whom we are indebted for giving us an entertaining and interesting evening.

This show was followed by two lantern lectures by Bill Russell, the first of Scottish scenery and club personalities and the second of views on the Arolla district of Switzerland. Both were interesting and the slides very good.

The following lantern lectures have been arranged:-

WEDNESDAY, 19th DECEMBER - Mr. Andy Gray.

WEDNESDAY, 23rd JANUARY, - Mr. Hamish Hamilton.

TOWER RIDGE:
5th April, 1936.

From a Diary.

The Tower Ridge loomed against the slowly-drifting clouds. Two thousand feet of rock, snow and ice mounting in curving aretes and steep towers to the long snow-waves of the summit cornices.

It was 11 a.m. when we started to cut steps on the approach slopes to its western side, and it was 3 p.m. when we reached the top of the Little Tower. In the snowy conditions of early April, this represented fast progress, and every step of the way had been a pure joy in the sunshine and frosty calm of a peerless climbing day. Bob Peel, my companion, was delighted with his first visit to the Ben, but with the conditions and the probability that this was the first ascent of the season, it was impossible for a climber to feel otherwise. But once on top of the tower, this carefree atmosphere began to fade. Here, at a great distance from the summit, the nose of the ridge which is comfortably roomy in summer had narrowed to a crest of iron-hard snow.

Progress was now much slower, but we climbed the slopes below the Great Tower, and reached the position of a terrace which makes a fine lunching-place in summer. Alas for our hopes of a resting-place! The terrace was obliterated by a steep cone of long-accumulated snow which gave the place a most inhospitable look, and we moved on to the start of the Eastern Traverse.

Our first view of the traverse was far from encouraging and Bob, seeing it for the first time, deemed it impossible; but time was too precious for an investigation of alternate routes and we started step-cutting along the ledge. The sensational corner of the traverse was reached by a line of nicks across a hanging band of snow, and turning it, one had a dizzy glimpse of snowy walls and an ice-fall far below. At the end of the ledge was the ice-crust slab leading up to the Arch, but of the Arch itself there was no other sign than a mass of bulging snow which merged into the wall of the Tower. Here we found our long axes to be very awkward indeed but every hold had to be freed of the encasing neve and it was a long time before we gained the level summit of the Tower.

The first thing we noticed on arrival was a circular hollow in the snow formed by the radiation of sunrays from the cairn marking the top. It was a little island of security among the encircling downfalls of crag and snow, and we slipped into it gladly for a smoke and a sandwich. As we lay and watched our smoke wreaths curling in the amazingly calm air of 4,000 ft above sea level, we heard the measured swishing of an ice axe in action. We had been hearing it for hours without seeing any other signs of life, but there was no time for investigation as night was drawing near and we were already nine hours out from our camp in Glen Nevis.

The moment we started to walk along the crest of the wall which joins the Tower to its parent crag we both developed acute cramp in the thighs. The long strain of climbing on the forepart of the feet had caused a tension on certain muscles and the change of angle was bringing/

bringing its reaction.

As we approached the Tower Gap our progress must have looked grotesque and I remember sliding along on one knee and trailing a rigid leg, when suddenly a call drifted down, and drew our attention to a pair of muffled figures above a cornice. I think they were Bell and Allen of the S.M.C. and I believe they had just finished the first ascent of Zero Gully which explained the mysterious step-cutting. I also think they made some humorous remarks about our slow progress and I certainly remember answering them with a string of curses trailing off into a groan. Then they vanished and left the darkening cornices to the advancing night and the whisper of rising spindthrift.

In the tense crossing of the Gap our cramp was soon forgotten, but I remember making a futile grab at my woollen helmet which dived into the ice-chute of the West Chimney then shot out for a greater plunge to its resting-place 1,500 ft below. One part of my brain was left to figure out the relative speeds of a balaclava and a falling body while the other directed my efforts on the ice beyond the Gap.

On the slopes above the Gap we paused to watch the afterglow of a splendid sunset, but night was creeping into the corries and bringing a sombre impressiveness to the great crags and we turned again to our step-cutting. We now felt that mounting tension which comes on certain climbs and we knew it would not reach its climax until the last angle gave way to the level planes of the summit. It was a state induced by the seemingly endless snowslopes. Every slope plunged over to the dim corries. Every little level and friendly projection was sheathed in snow and ice and moulded into the universal sweep of the slopes and every nerve and muscle was strained to oppose it. Yet, we spoke only of our hunger, of the long, overnight car journey before us and of the cold, incandescent effect of the moonlight as it crept down the snows of the North East Buttress.

At length we reached the final obstacle, the ice-filled scoop leading to the small cornice which often forms above the Tower Ridge. In summer it is an easy scramble but in three winter ascents I have found it to be the crux of the climb. We climbed it slowly and carefully and nothing was heard but the rustling of drift and ice-fragments and the curses of the second man when an odd sliver went inside his collar.

Then the leader steeped from the vertical to a slope of no more than fifteen degrees, and it was over. In a few moments all tension was gone. We stood and looked over the crags with complete detachment. Then we raced over the snowslopes and glissaded wildly down the Red Burn towards the friendly lights of Fort William. We were conscious only of a grand elation and in no way disposed to sort out the conflicting elements which gave it birth.

It was sufficient that the moon was shining across the homeward path and painting its magic across the hills and glens, and if anything clouded our minds, it was no more than the thought of starting a well-frozen Austin into life again.

J.B. NIWLIN.

RETURN TO THE HILLS.

Not the least attractive feature of mountaineering is the pleasure to be derived from it both in prospect and in retrospect. During four years in a flat land most of my climbing was on this plane. Many were hills re-climbed in imagination and even more numerous the expeditions planned for the future.

The 6.10 train to Spean Bridge seemed a grand way of renewing acquaintance with old friends. The Arrochar Hills, Ben Lomond, the Crianlarich massif, all recall grand days in fair weather and many more in wind and rain. Ben Lui showed itself for a fleeting glimpse before the line, deep in the shadow of Ben Odhar, swung away towards the Moor of Rannoch.

This wild expanse, purple and brown in its autumn garb with here and there the golden shingle of a tiny lochan; on its borders the Mamores and on the east myriad peaks with Schiehallion prominent, was at its most attractive with cloud shadows chasing each other across its surface.

With a backward glance at the Aonachs and Nevis, we took the long road up Glen More. Glengarry and Glenshiel, with their guardian hills beguiled the long miles to Kyle where the low sun lit up the fretted peaks of the Coolin. Despite the rough road, the ride into Glen Brittle was accomplished safely and enjoyably.

The next ten days are ten of the most delightful in my memory - golden days when to be out, either on the beach, on the hills or sailing over the sunflecked sea with the outer isles purple black on the horizon was life itself. Coruisk on a brilliant day when the silence was almost terrifying or a wild day on the ridge with the mist boiling up out of Coruisk like some devil's brew are but two of the memories of that holiday. Here's hoping many more of the returning lads will soon follow in my footsteps.

S. DRYSDALE.

MOUNTAINEER IN EXILE.

Wandering has always been in my blood. Even by occupation I am a wanderer, namely a travelling salesman. But to wander for 4,000 miles without having to cross a mountain or traverse a ridge is unbelievable. The nearest approach to climbing a mountain I have been was as O.P. Officer on a field shoot on the ranges in England, the ranges being situated on the Borders and the Highest point of observation being 1,600 feet. The O.P. Party consisted of four officers under instruction and about three sergeants, all members being loaded with wireless gear, telephone maps, field glasses and all the impedimenta one requires for the destruction of nature.

When climbing for sport I have, as I toiled up the various slopes often wondered why I should torture my muscles and body when my better feelings told me that it would be much easier and pleasanter to follow the burn through the Glen in search of the elusive trout. And/

MOUNTAINEER IN EXILE. (Contd).

And the language I have heard my companions use has been of the best vintage but nothing to compare with the rich and prolific expression of opinion about senior officers who ordered seven Officers and N.C.O's to spend the day on the hill tops loaded with anything but beer, whiskey and grub.

The remnants of the past winter's snow were still lying around in patches and in the gullies and I expected to see the old familiar sight of roped parties cutting steps and glissading back down into the valley but, no, only shells and flying earth and stones greeted my wandering gaze. On the return journey I managed to descend un-encumbered and finding a gully still full of snow I had quite an exciting glissade amid the frightened shouts of my companions who were convinced I had gone "crackers".

That is all the mountaineering I have done in five long years. But the memories of the past are still alive and when idly turning over the pages of a war book one evening I came across some pictures of mountain warfare. Back into my nostrils in a flash came a breath of crisp mountain air and I could hear the chip chip of an ice axe and far away on the breeze came the old familiar call of "LOOOOQmonds."

The existence of mountains on the Continent is a myth, I am convinced, because I have come across France, Belgium, Holland and quite a portion of Germany and not seen a mountain of any kind. If there are any in Germany they must be in a concentration camp somewhere. Lack of hills in Holland is compensated for by the magnificent fir woods and for two weeks I was fortunate to be able to "doss" in a small hut in the woods near Bergen Op Zoom. Our sport there consisted of firing at buzz bombs bound for Antwerp and a little wild duck shooting to fill in the time.

On one memorable occasion I heard that Len Holroyd was at Nijmegen and I set out to look him up just after the Rhine Crossing. In his tent he had some photographs of the "Gorms, Lairig Ghru and Glen Coe. Naturally, our main topic of conversation was Hills and Bens and absent but luckier friends.

Wisps of mountain air came stealing out of the blue from time to time in dehydrated form labelled the "Lomond Journal" to revive many happy memories and experiences nearly forgotten.

The recent events in world history bring the key to my fetters nearer and nearer, and before Xmas at least I hope to say goodbye to exile.

N. GUY.

A FEW DAYS IN ROSS-SHIRE.

In September Maisie and Jimmy Haining and Flora and Harry Grant spent a week "on the trek" through some of the deer forests of Ross-Shire. This is really magnificent country, wild and rugged with an abundance of mountain paths winding and zig-zagging their way through the hills. The wildness of the scenery, the wild life, and the absence of any contact with civilisation (not to mention the weight of our packs) provides for even a week in this part of the country all the atmosphere of an "expedition."

On this occasion we chose Dundonnell to Letterewe on Loch Maree. The journey takes in three mountain passes and although the distance is only 21 miles and could, no doubt, be done in a day, we found that even a week was hopelessly inadequate to visit all the places we would have liked to explore on this short stretch of country.

Our first objective - in fact our only objective at the outset - was An Teallach. This is a most impressive mountain both as seen from the distance and even more so from the corrie of Loch Toll and Lochan. When examined close at hand, however, it is disappointing from rock-climbing point of view. The rock is red sandstone and is weather-grooved giving rounded holds generally sloping outwards. Where the angle holds back the holds are sufficient for footholds but whenever the angle steepens and handholds are essential the red sandstone is usually found wanting. The greatest feature of An Teallach from a technical climbing point of view is its numerous and varied gullies which would have extensive potentialities for winter or spring. The summit ridge a scramble in summer and reminiscent of Arran, would also be interesting in winter.

In this vicinity, on the east side of Coir' a' Ghuibhsachain (or Garbh Allt) there is an escarpment about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long of Cambrian Quartzite some 200/250 ft high and a more perfect place for a rock-climbing school could not be imagined. By Buachaille standards there is anything from a 60 ft Curved Ridge to a 200 ft. Agag's with routes by the dozen in between. This is worth a visit on a "rest" day.

Another very attractive mountain we visited was Beinn Dearg Mhor (also red sandstone) and we found it to be more or less another An Teallach on a less extensive scale.

Other points of interest on the way were a most aesthetic spot for a camp site where Glen Nid and the path from Dundonnell meet in Strath na Sheallag; Loch na Sheallag with its sandy shore - rather a characteristic feature of the lochs of this district, and the path over the Carnmore. This is truly classical. Descending Allt Bruthach an Easain you turn a sharp corner and there is opened up before you a most wonderful panorama of crags. Immediately below is the Dubh Loch with Raven's Crag rising almost from the water's edge while behind is the $2\frac{1}{2}$ mile long summit cliffs of Ben Lair. To the right is the Fionn Loch with Meall Mheinnidh and the rocky pyramid of Ben Aridh Charr, while above Carnmore is the buttress of Sgurr Na Laocain. Unfortunately, we had time only to view all this in the passing but we should have liked to spend another week right there. However, our way/

way lay over the Beallach Mheinnidh to Loch Maree and home.

This was only one small stretch of this wonderful country and I can recommend it even for a week but would recommend a month - or two.

A most useful book for anyone visiting any of these parts is "Beyond the Great Glen" by F. Reid Corsan which is a wealth of information, its nineteen chapters each dealing with a separate district or group of districts.

J. HAINING.

CLUB MEETS:

GLENCOE, 6th-7th OCTOBER, 1945.

Present - S. Drysdale, W. Gordon, H & F. Grant, J. & M. Haining, J. Harvey, A. Kay, P.L. McGeoch, T. McGuinness, T. McKee, W. Russell, J. Shanks, A & M. Slack, J. Stevenson and R. Young.

This was one of those glorious week-ends that sometimes crop up at the tail-end of the season. A crisp evening and clear skies made the journey up the loch-side outstanding and the loch never looked lovelier.

With the promise of fine weather most of the club camped at the Etive and the following day saw the Buachaille inundated by hosts of exuberant climbers.

W. Gordon, F. Grant, J. Haining after starting on the Slanting Groove on the N. Buttress, spent the day zig-zagging about the face and, while thoroughly enjoying themselves, did not appear to be on any particular route.

P. McGeoch was coaching a party up the Crowberry by Greig's Ledge. T. McKee and M. Haining and A. and M. Slack made up two of the many parties that ascended Agag's. A. Slack later joined the party on the N. Buttress.

H. Grant with a member of the Climber's Club was on Agag's. They also did the Helicon Traverse, finishing with the descent of Agag's from below the crux, H. Grant then going on to climb Crowberry and across to the members on the N. Buttress.

S. Drysdale and T. McGuinness had a leisurely scramble on the curved ridge and a grandstand view of the more energetic members. Collie's climb was ascended by R. Young and J. Stevenson.

J. Shanks was introducing some friends to Glencoe by way of Bidian Nam Bian, while J. Harvey was on the Aonach Eagach.

H.W.G.

GLENCOE, 20/21st October, 1945.

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Present - S. Drysdale, W. Gordon, J. Harvey, J. Hutton, R. & J. Hutcheson, A. Hutcheson, A. Kay, P.L. McGeoch, T. McKee, A. & M. Slack, J. Stevenson and R. Young.

By way of a change the club camped at Loch Triochatan and had a fine welcome from the Elliot's. It was pleasant to be able to camp here again without the interference of the Local Home Guard.

Sunday was an unpromising day with heavy mist and showers of rain but everyone went on to the hills.

W. Gordon with a friend went into Clachaig Chasm but retreated after reaching the foot of the Great Cave Pitch. They were followed later by P. McGeoch and R. Young who were also forced by bad conditions to abandon the climb. J. Harvey, T. McKee, and A. Kay went on to Bell's Buttress on Aonach Dubh with friends. They were joined by A. and M. Slack.

Drysdale and Hutton were on Stob Coire Nam Beith. The Hutcheson's camped at Loch Tullash

In spite of a thorough soaking members enjoyed the week-end.

J. HARVEY.

GLEN STRAE, 3/4th November, 1945.

Present - A. Kay, A. Hutcheson, J. Hutcheson, R. Hutcheson, J. Hutton, S. Drysdale, J. Harvey, C. Finlayson, R. Dobbie, W. Forrest, T. McGuinness, J. Stevenson, R. Young, T. McKee, A. Slack, M. Slack, J. Muir, W. Russell, W. Gordon and P. McGeoch.

A week-end which was exceptional for the mildness of the weather and indeed for the uncomfortable warmth experienced on the Sunday morning on Ben Eunaich. This was the "Turkish Bath" atmosphere caused by the sun shining on a thin layer of mist and already described by J.B. Nimlin in a previous Journal in an article on Garbh Bheinn.

Members climbed on Ben Eunaich and Ben a Chochuill. A notable expedition was made by Slack and Russell to Ben nan Aighean on the far side of Glen Kinglass. Unfortunately they were late in getting back and held the bus back for an hour.

Messrs Kay and McGeoch with two non-members, in two parties, climbed the Black Shoot. For the first 200' this consists of a few knobs of rock, invariably loose in a welter of vegetation. After this has been clawed up, the Twisting Chimney is reached. This provides about 90' of strenuous climbing on moss covered rock, with the best foot and hand holds loose. The easy looking 30' wall above the chimney was found greasy and severe. In the middle of this stretch, McGeoch took a leg cramp and had to receive the assistance of a loop from above.

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Descending the hill, the party from the Black Shoot found members **McGuinness**, Gordon, Dobbie and Forrest and a number of non-members emerging from a very wet water-course which they had climbed by valiantly pulling themselves through a series of waterfalls. They had gone into this on the strength of the wrong information that it was the Black Shoot.

P.L. McG.

GLEN LOCHY, 17/18th November, 1945.

Present - A. Kay, A. Hutcheson, J. Hutton, S. Drysdale, J. Harvey, C. Finlayson, N. Parker, J. Wilson, B. Dobbie, W. Forrest, I. Martin, T. McGuinness, J. Stevenson, T. McKee, P. McGeoch, R. Young, A. Slack, M. Slack and J. Muir.

The weather leaving Glasgow on Saturday afternoon was cold with the promise of a frost at night. However, by the time Charlie McAteer had displayed his driving skill by taking the bus to the camping ground beyond the Falls of Lochy, it had turned mild and sitting by the camp fire in the light of a misted moon was pleasant and comfortable.

With the exception of Kay and McGeoch who climbed Meall Ghaordie all the members were on the Meall Ptarmigan ridge.

The two enthusiasts who carried out ice-axes found little to do with them. In fact the only snow discovered was a two-square inch patch nestling coyly under a rock on Meall Ghaordie.

Still the winter is young yet and there may be a chance of using an axe before long. In fact some optimistic members are hoping for snow covered peaks by the New Year.

P.L. McG.

CLIMBS and EXCURSIONS.
AONACH BEAG - N.E. ARETE.

The wild weather at the Autumn Holiday week-end prevented our walking through from Nevis to Corrour, so on Monday we set off from Steall to find the North East Arete of Aonach Beag. This ridge is spoken enthusiastically of in the Central Highlands Guide and seemed worth a visit.

From Upper Steall the route followed was over the Aonach Beag - Sgurr Choinich col. thence down the glen to the foot of the ridge which was reached around 2.30 p.m. Once there it is well worth a visit, narrow and steep although somewhat mossy in its lower part. Not having a rope, we avoided two vertical pitches on the north-east face. Hereabouts this face is very loose and, properly equipped, the best route would be to follow the crest. In winter this ridge should be a magnificent outing as it will hold the snow, much of it being between 3,000 to 4,000 ft. and facing N.E.

AONACH BEAG - N.E. ARETE. (Contd).

It can be reached much more quickly from Upper Steall via the Aonach Beag - Aonach Mor col. The house at Upper Steall is still reasonably weather tight but that at lower Steall would be of little use under winter conditions as it is completely devoid of windows.

S. DRYSDALE.

AN TEALLACH?

Prominent on the escarpment on the east side of Coir' a' Ghuibhsachan already mentioned in the Journal, is a fine clean buttress. Situated directly opposite the point where the burn from Loch Toll and Lochan turns down the Garbh All Corrie, and easily distinguished by its remarkable whiteness, it gives some 230 ft. of delightful climbing.

Two routes were made by a party consisting of H. and F. Grant, and J. and M. Haining on 11th September, 1945. Both routes are severe and exposed but the holds, though small, are sound and adequate.

Route 1 (Cairned) Starts at centre of Buttress.

- (1) 130 ft. Ascend by series of walls and narrow traverses to broad ledge (no belay).
- (2) 70 ft. Start right and then climb direct to belay.
- (3) Easier rocks lead to summit.

Route 11 (Cairned). Starts at lowest point a few feet to right of Route 1.

- (1) 100 ft. Go obliquely left to right-hand corner of large oblong block (no belay).
- (2) 25 ft. Climb direct to broad ledge. (Belay).
- (3) 100 ft. From lowest point of ledge climb obliquely right.

H.W. GRANT.
